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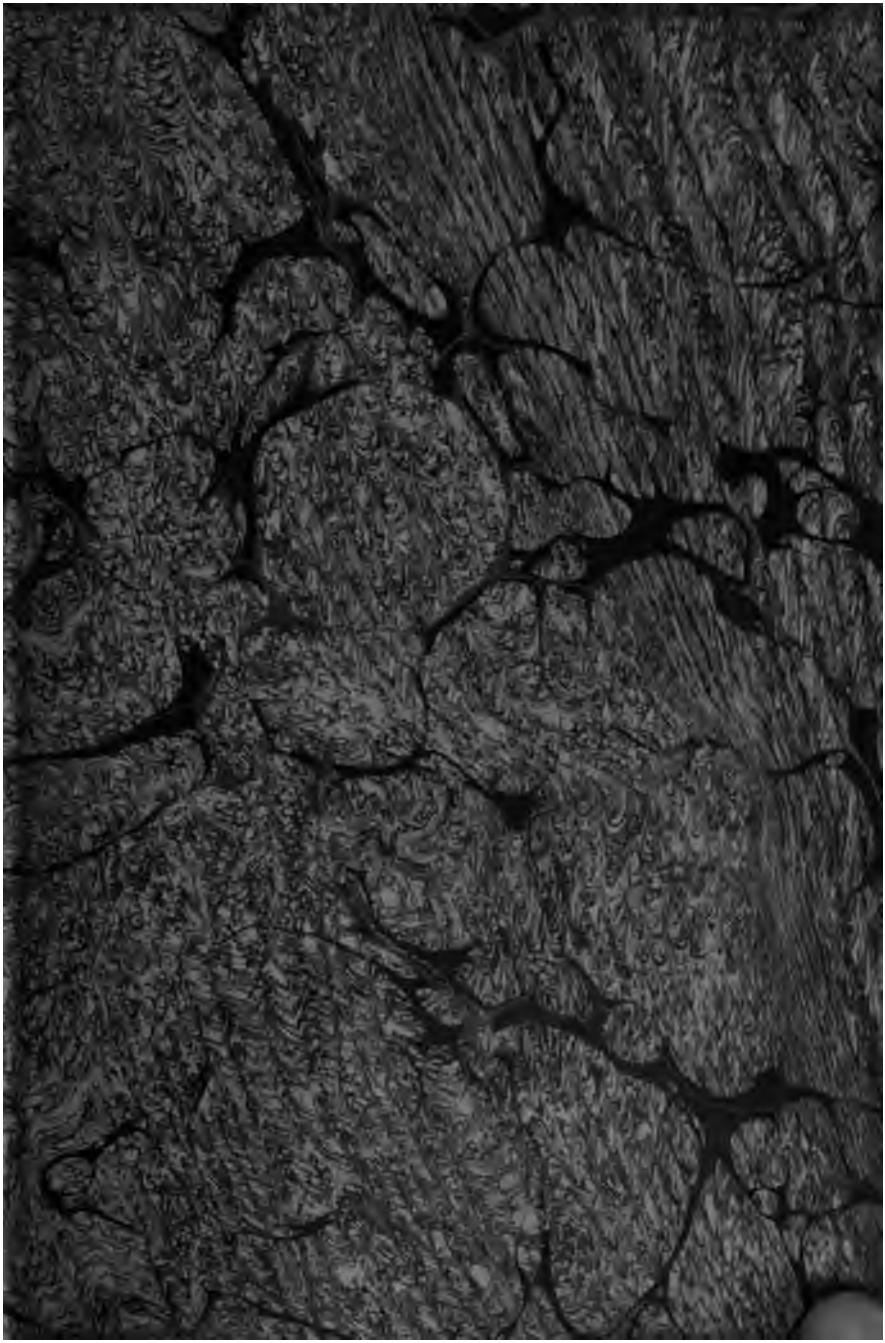

Gospel of Peter. English. 1893.

A FRAGMENT

OF THE

APOCRYPHAL GOSPEL

OF

ST. PETER

Found at Akhmim in Egypt.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK

SECOND EDITION.

F. NORGATE AND CO.
14, SHAFTESBURY AVENUE, LONDON.
1893.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In the edition of the Apocryphal Gospels translated by Rev. B. H. Cowper the Gospel of St. Peter is mentioned with others of which we know little beyond their titles. This apocryphal gospel seems to have been in use among the early churches and is mentioned by Justin, and it is strange that no fragment should have been preserved considering the interest that was attached to it. We may, however, presume that its heretical tendency, as it was used by the Docetæ, led to its destruction at the disappearance of this particular heresy. It is supposed to have been written about the year 170, and in the winter of the year 1886—7 has been found a fragment in the tomb of an obscure monk who lived according to the surmises of the discoverer at some time between the 8th and the 12th century.

During the excavation made by the French archæological mission in Egypt under the direction of Mons. Grébault a parchment codex was found in a tomb at Akhmîm. This codex (about 6 inches by 4¾ broad) consists of 33 leaves without any pagination. On page 1. is a Coptic Cross with the letters Alpha and Omega, then comes the fragment of the Gospel of Peter on pages 2 to 10. Pages 11 and 12 are blank, following which is a fragment of the Apocalypse of St. Peter 7 pages (this part is reversed so that it reads from pages 19 to 13), next to it is another blank page after which

(pages 21—66) are two fragments of the Book of Enoch, one of 30 pages and the other 16. The Manuscript is sewn together in cardboard covered with leather which has become blackened by age. In the binding there are portions of two MSS. in beautiful uncial letters, the one a portion of a gospel, the other of a life of a saint. Mons. Bouriant was the first to edit this Codex which is written by different hands in the Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique française de Caire, Tome IX. Fasc. 1. 1892. and added to it a French translation. Since then Pastor Lods has brought out an edition with a Latin translation in which are a few emendations, and later Prof. Harnack has published one in his series of texts of the Gospel and Apocalypse in which are several valuable improvements. There have been published in this country some editions of the text and two translations suitable to scholars, but we thought there might be room for a translation for the general public.

It is evident from the many quotations that the author of this Gospel was acquainted with the Synoptical Gospels and possibly with the Gospel of St. John, the difficulty is to explain the many discrepances to which attention is called at the end.

March, 1893.

Since the first Edition appeared two facsimiles have been published, one edited by Gebhardt and the other by Bouriant, which forms a volume of the Mémories de la Mission Archéologique française de Caire.

May, 1893.

THE

[APOCRYPHAL GOSPEL OF St. PETER.]

But none of the Jews washed their hands, neither Herod nor any of his judges, although they wished to wash. Pilate arose* and then Herod the king ordered them to seize the Lord, saying to them, "What I have commanded you to do, that do."

But then came there Joseph, the friend of Pilate and of the Lord, and knowing that they would crucify the Lord, came to Pilate and begged the body of the Lord for burial. And Pilate, having sent to Herod, begged his body, and Herod said, "Brother Pilate, although no one should have asked for it, we should have buried it, as now the sabbath is about to dawn; for it is written in the law that it is not lawful for the sun to set on one that is slain on the day before the feast of unleavened bread."

But they, having seized† the Lord, running to him, struck him, and said, "Let us drag about the Son of God, having obtained power over him." And they put on him the purple robe, and made him to sit on the seat of judgement, saying, "Judge justly, O King of Israel." And one of them having brought a crown of thorns, put it on the head of the Lord, and others standing by, spat in his face, and others smote his cheek, and others pierced him with a reed, and some scourged him, saying, "With such honour we honour the son of God." And they brought forward two malefactors and crucified the Lord in the middle between them. But he was silent as if having no pain.‡ And when they had set up the cross they wrote on it, "This is the King of Israel." And when they

* According to Gebhardt "When they wished to wash, Pilate arose."
† Lods has "found." ‡ "Making no complaint" according to Bouriant.

had laid down his clothes before him, they divided them, and cast lots for them. But one of the malefactors reproved them saying, "We suffer for the evil which we have done, but he, having become the Saviour of men, what evil has he done to you?" And they being angry with him, commanded that his limbs should not be broken, that he might die in torture.

But it was midday; and darkness covered the whole of Judea, and they were disturbed and anxious lest by chance the sun should set while yet he lived. For it is written for them that it is not lawful for the sun to set on one slain. And one of them said, "Give him to drink gall with vinegar." And having mixed it, they gave him to drink. And they fulfilled all things, and completed their sins on their heads. But many went about with torches, thinking that it was night, and fell down. And the Lord, crying out, said, "My power, my power, thou hast left me!" And saying this, he was taken up, and at that hour the veil of the temple at Jerusalem was rent in two.

Then they took out the nails from the hands of the Lord, and laid him on the earth, and the whole earth shook, and then arose a great fear. Then the sun shone out again, and it was found to be the ninth hour. But the Jews rejoiced and gave the body to Joseph that he might bury it, since he had seen all the good things which he had done. But when he received the Lord he washed him and wrapped him in fine linen, and laid him in his own tomb called the garden of Joseph. Then the Jews and the elders and the priests, seeing the evil they had done to themselves, began to bewail and to say, "Woe for our sins! The judgement has drawn near, and the end of Jerusalem."

But I was grieving with my companions, and troubled in our minds we hid ourselves. For we were sought for by them as if malefactors and as wishing to burn the temple. But on account of all these things we fasted and sat down mourning and weeping night and day until the sabbath.

But the scribes and Pharisees and elders met together among themselves, and they heard that the whole people murmured and struck their breasts, saying, "Since from his death these very great signs have happened, see how just he was!" The elders were terrified, and came to Pilate beseeching him and saying, "Give to us soldiers that we may guard his sepulchre for three days, lest by chance his disciples should come and take him away, and the people would conceive that he had risen from the dead, and they would do evil to us." But Pilate gave up to them Petronius, the centurion, with soldiers, that they should guard the tomb, and with them went the elders and scribes to the sepulchre; and they, with the centurion and the soldiers, rolled a large stone, and together with all who were there, placed it at the door of the sepulchre and sealed it with seven seals, and having fixed their tent there they watched. But in the morning, at the break of day of the sabbath, the crowd came from Jerusalem, and the region round about, that they might see the sepulchre sealed.

But in that night, when the Lord's day was breaking, the soldiers keeping watch two by two, a great voice arose in the heaven, and they saw the heavens opened, and two men descending thence who shone with great splendour and stood over the tomb; but the stone which had been placed at the door, rolling away of itself went away from its place, and the tomb was open and both the young men went in. When therefore the soldiers saw these things they awoke the centurion and the elders, for they were present and keeping guard. And while telling them what they had seen, they again behold three men coming out of the tomb, and the two supporting the one, and the cross following them, and the heads of the two reached to the heavens,* and that of him who was being led went above the heavens, and they heard a voice from heaven saying, "Have you preached to those

* Bouriant has "They pointed with their hands to heaven."

who slept?" And from the cross there was heard, "Yea." They therefore took counsel together among themselves, whether they should depart and relate these things to Pilate: and while they were considering again the heavens appear to open and a certain man descending and going into the sepulchre. Seeing these things, those who were about the centurion by night hastened to Pilate, deserting the sepulchre which they were guarding, and related all things which they had seen, greatly anxious and saying, "Truly he was the Son of God. Pilate answering said, "I am pure from the blood of the Son of God, but so it pleased you." Afterwards they all approaching begged him and prayed that he would command the centurion and the soldiers that they should not tell what they had seen. "For we would rather," they say, "be guilty of the greatest sin before God than fall into the hands of the people of the Jews and be stoned." Pilate therefore commanded the centurion and the soldiers that they should say nothing.

But at daybreak of the Lord's Day Mary Magdalene, a disciple of the Lord, (being afraid of the Jews because they were inflamed with anger, she had not done on the sepulchre what the women were accustomed to do in honour of the dead and of those whom they love) had taken friends with her and came to the sepulchre where he was laid, and feared lest the Jews should see them, and said, "Although we were not able on the day itself of the crucifixion to weep and to mourn, we may now indeed do them at his sepulchre. But who will roll away for us the stone which was placed at the door of the sepulchre, that going in we may sit down beside him and do those things which are right? For the stone is great, and we are afraid lest any one will see us, and if we are not able, we can lay down at the door what we have brought as a memorial to him, and will weep and lament until we return to our home."

And when they would have departed, they found the tomb empty, and when they had approached, they, bending down,

looked in, and saw there a young man sitting in the midst of the tomb, beautiful and clothed with most shining dress, who said to them, "Why have you come? Whom do you seek? Is it he that was crucified? He has risen and departed. But since you do not believe, look in and see that he is not in the place where he lay: for he has risen and gone away where he was sent." Then the women fled away terrified.

But it was the last day of the feast of unleavened bread, and many went away, returning to their own homes, the the feast being ended. But we, the twelve disciples of the Lord, wept and mourned, and each, grieved at what had happened, departed to his own home. But I, Simon Peter, and Andrew my brother, having taken again our nets, went out on the sea. And there was with us Levi Alphæus whom the Lord * * * * * * * * *

Prof. Harnack sums up the difference between this apocryphal Gospel and the canonical ones as follows:—

1 That Herod was among the condemning judges, and that he also disposed of the body of Jesus.

2 That the Jews, Herod, and the judges, also wished to wash their hands, but by the breaking up of the meeting(by Pilate) were unable to do so.

3 That Joseph was the friend of Pilate.

4 That he had begged from Pilate the body of Jesus before the Crucifixion, and that he had been sent by the latter to Herod.

5 The hastening (of the soldiers) to strike him and their speech.

6 The mocking of the soldiers ("Judge justly, O King of Israel.")

7 Their further mocking ("With such honour we honour the Son of God.")

8 The "as having no pain."

9 The "And they laid the clothes before him."

10 That one of the malefactors scolded the multitude.

11 That this malefactor did not have his bones broken.

12 That Jesus was given to drink a mixture of gall and vinegar.

13 That in the darkness many went about with torches and fell down.

14 That our Lord called out, "My power" &c.

15 That he died with this cry.

16 The taking out of the nails in his hands on the descent from the cross.

17 That the earth shook when the body was laid on it.

18 That the Jews rejoiced when the sun appeared again.

19 That Joseph had seen all the good which our Lord had done.

20 That Joseph washed the body.

21 The lamentation of the Jews and their leaders over their sins, and the expectation of judgement on Jerusalem.

22 That the disciples kept themselves hidden, full of grief, and fasted, and wept until the Sabbath.

23 That they were accused of being malefactors and such as would set fire to the Temple.

24 That the captain of the watch was named Petronius.

25 That the captain, the soldiers, and the elders moved the stone.

26 That the elders also watched at the grave.

27 That seven seals were placed on the grave.

28 That a tent was placed there.

29 That on the morning of the Sabbath the people came out of Jerusalem to see the sealed grave.

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